CDC and Food Safety

> "I am the one asking you—on behalf of myself, my family, and the 1500 others who were sickened—please make our food system safe."
>
> —Testimony from the congressional hearing, "The Outbreak of *Salmonella* in Eggs," held September 22, 2010

Food-related diseases affect tens of millions of people, kill thousands, and cause billions of dollars in health care-related costs each year. Reducing foodborne illness by just 1% would keep about 500,000 Americans from getting sick each year; reducing foodborne illness by 10% would keep 5 million from getting sick.

What is CDC's role in food safety?

Food safety depends on strong partnerships. CDC and the regulatory agencies (the Food and Drug Administration [FDA] and the US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service [FSIS]) play complementary roles in the federal food safety effort. State and local health departments also play critical roles in all aspects of food safety.

CDC provides the vital link between illness in people and the food safety systems of government agencies and food producers.

CDC does this by:

Monitoring human illness—
Tracking the occurrence of foodborne diseases

Defining the public health burden of foodborne illness

Attributing illness to specific foods and settings

Investigating outbreaks and sporadic cases—
Managing the DNA "fingerprinting" network for foodborne illness-causing germs in all states to detect outbreaks

Empowering state and local health departments

Targeting prevention measures to meet long-term food safety goals

Informing food safety action and policy—
FDA's national egg safety regulation that went into effect July 9, 2010, was driven in large part by decades of CDC data and investigative findings.

Current food safety challenges

Challenges to food safety will continue to arise in unpredictable ways, largely due to:

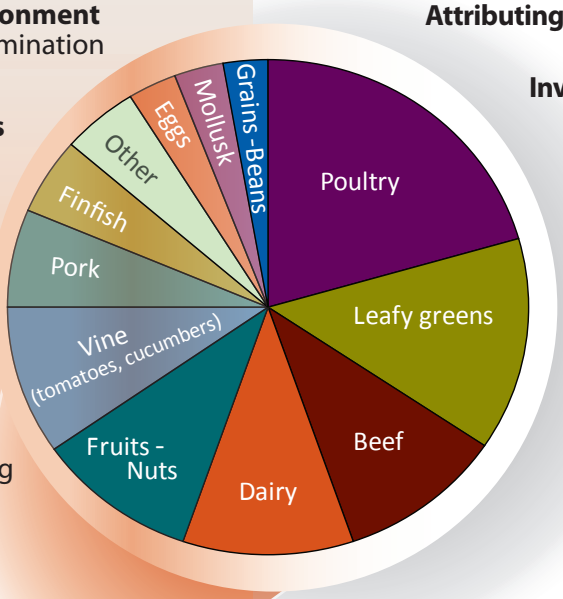
Changes in our food production and supply

Changes in the environment leading to food contamination

Rising number of multistate outbreaks

New and emerging germs, toxins, and antibiotic resistance

New and different contaminated foods, such as prepackaged raw cookie dough, bagged spinach, and peanut butter, causing illness



Causes of illness in 1,335 single food outbreaks, 2003–2007

National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases

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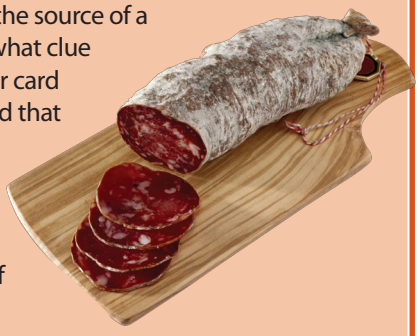
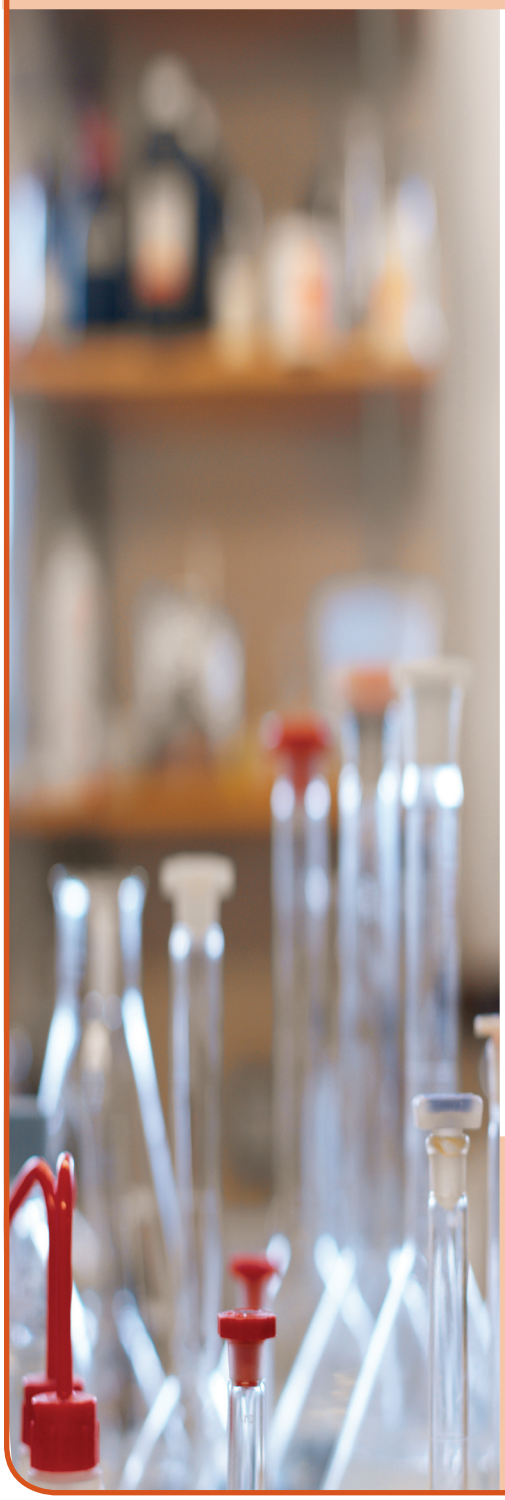
A food sleuth + a shopper card + a salami = Successful investigation

"A disease detective" is how CDC's Casey Barton Behravesh described her role in tracking down the source of a *Salmonella* outbreak in 2010 that sickened more than 270 persons in more than 40 states. And what clue unlocked the mystery? Something most of us have in our wallets or on our key rings—a shopper card that you swipe at the grocery store. After the Washington State Department of Health discovered that many ill people shopped at one grocery store chain, they used shopper card information (with permission) to identify a food that all of the ill people had eaten: salami from one producer. A multistate investigation identified salami coated with pepper as the source, and the salami was recalled. Without violating the shoppers' privacy, the resourceful use of unconventional data helped CDC and its public health partners across the country more quickly identify the source of the problem and stop the outbreak.





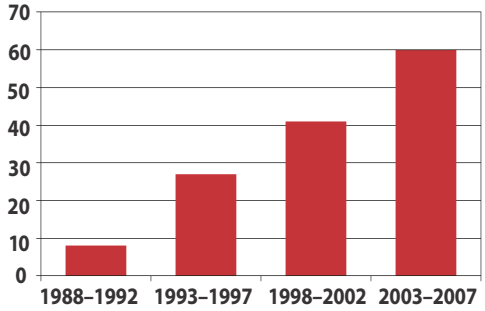
Winnable battles in food safety

- **Decrease *Salmonella* and other food-related infections**
- **Accelerate the public health response to foodborne illness at the local, national, and global levels**

We're taking action:

- **Discovery**—Tracking trends and risk factors, defining the burden, finding new pathogens and drug resistance, and attributing illness to specific foods
- **Innovation**—Developing new tools and methods in epidemiology, laboratory science, and environmental health
- **Implementation**—Sharing new technology and information with local, state, and federal partners; improving communications with the public health community, industry, and consumers; and targeting information to guide policy

Multistate foodborne outbreaks, 1988–2007



What's next:

- Faster, more effective methods to identify, characterize, and fingerprint *Salmonella* and other food-related pathogens in public health laboratories
- Sentinel sites that are faster at gathering and processing multiple sources of information during an outbreak
- More and better data to focus food safety strategies, policies, and prevention efforts

Germs (and some foods) responsible for most foodborne illness:

- *Campylobacter* (poultry)
- *E. coli* O157 (ground beef, leafy greens, raw milk)
- *Listeria* (deli meats, unpasteurized soft cheeses, produce)
- *Salmonella* (eggs, poultry, meat, produce)
- *Vibrio* (raw oysters)
- Norovirus in many foods (e.g., sandwiches, salads)
- *Toxoplasma* (meats)

Please visit us at www.cdc.gov/foodsafety

October 2010